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PLEAS TO FIX SPEED PERILS

Kieran Davey
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CALLS have been made for a crackdown on speeding motorists, amid growing concerns about drivers breaking the limit in Banbury.

Thames Valley Police has already said complaints about Dukes Meadow Drive and Warwick Road have prompted them to look again at those routes, including possible enforcement measures.

But other stretches, such as Bretch Hill, have now also been highlighted by people wanting more done before there is a serious crash.

The councillor for Easington South, John Colgrave, claimed people were disregarding the 20mph speed limits in Bretch Hill and said it would not be long before there was a major accident.

He said: "I've heard so many concerns from residents about this stretch of road over the last couple of years.

"People have complained about the dangers to themselves and their children.

"Lots of pets have already been run over and this has been obviously very upsetting for their owners.

"The problems are just unnecessary and there should be some form of enforcement from the police."

He added that if police were going to play more of a role looking at speeding drivers, more should be done to enforce the existing limits.

Mr Colgrave suggested that speed warning lights could be an alternative to a police presence on the road.

The Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Superintendent for Thames Valley Police, Katharine Lowe, said in a letter to Banbury Town Council that the force's position over enforcement of speed limits had not changed and that they believed the roads should be "self-enforcing."

She said: "Police policy is that 20mph limits and zones should be self-enforcing, through either physical calming measures or natural character road alignment.

"Some full width speed humps have been reduced to speed cushions at the request of local passenger vehicle operators in the last five years, without compromising speed reducing intention for smaller vehicles."

But she added that Dukes Meadow Drive and Warwick Road would be looked at and intervention from the neighbourhood team, roads policing and other methods could be used.

Calls have been made to crack down on drivers flouting the 20mph limit

Mr Colgrave said speeding problems were not isolated to Bretch Hill, and he had heard concerns about other roads, including Springfield Avenue.

Frank Gabbidon, landlord of the Admiral Holland pub in Woodgreen Avenue, said "We've had quite a few idiots skidding round the roundabout and causing problems for pedestrians.

"We had an incident last week, where one customer told me they had seen a car, out their window, rush round the roundabout and narrowly miss a pedestrian walking on the path."

A letter to Banbury Town Council from the county council accepted that speeding posed a high risk to residents, pets and property, and said incidents involving speeding could "significantly diminish quality of life for those who live in the area".

It said the council had carried out "a significant number of traffic improvement schemes in Banbury" and said plans to further reduce risks were introduced in the Local Transport Plan, which was updated for Banbury in March 2014.

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Comment on cuts

OXON: Residents have less than a week to have their say on the possible closure of household waste recycling centres in the county.

Oxfordshire County Council operates seven centres costing a total of £4.1 million a year but has to make savings of £350,000 from its budget.

It is looking to shut up to four sites to save the cash.

The consultation runs to October 5, with a decision likely by the end of this year. Go to consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Call for runners

BANBURY: Dogs for the Disabled is looking for runners to join it for the 2016 London Marathon.

Runners are expected to pay a £100 non-refundable registration fee to go towards fundraising. They must also raise at least £1,950 in sponsorship.

The charity, based in the Frances Hay Centre, Blacklocks Hill, trains assistance dogs to help people with physical disabilities and families with a child with autism.

The marathon is on April 24. Places will be allocated in mid-October, after race ballot results are announced.

Call 01295 759811 or email lydia.martin@dogsforthedisabled.org.

Racers to return

BANBURY: Formula 1 team Manor will be moving into a new factory in the town.

The former Marussia outfit has been without a permanent base since it went into administration on the eve of last year's United States Grand Prix.

Its old Banbury factory, in Overthorpe Road, was sold by administrators to the new Haas team.

Since then, Manor has been operating from Dinnington, near Sheffield, and offices at Silverstone.

The team's cars will return to the new factory after this weekend's Japanese Grand Prix. Manor has not yet confirmed where the new base will be.

Fake money alert

N OXON: Fake £20 notes are being used in Banbury.

PCSO Paul Gale said Thames Valley Police has had "increasing reports" of the fake notes.

He said there had been four reports of notes used at shops in Lockheed Close and the town centre and advised: "Alert neighbours and remain extra vigilant."

'Divide and conquer' fears of children's centre closure lobby

CAMPAIGNERS fighting children's centres closures across Oxfordshire say they fear council leaders will attempt to "divide and conquer" by choosing to keep some open and close others.

Supporters have staged a series of demonstrations against shutting 44 centres along with seven early intervention hubs.

Mum-of-two Jill Huish, 33, of Banbury, who is leading the Save Oxfordshire Children's Centres campaign, said: "The county council wants each children's centre to put forward representatives to take part in the consultation.

"I think there is a danger that the council could try to divide and conquer, by suggesting the closure of some centres and not others.

"Now is not the time to fight for individual centres. Our only chance is to fight for all of them."

The council has proposed replacing the centres with eight family and resource centres. A reduced service would cost half the £16m currently spent, it said.

However, cabinet member for children, education and families Melinda Tilley said: "There will not be an attempt to divide and conquer and I am quite happy to keep talking to campaigners.

"County councillor Mark Gray has agreed to talk to volunteers in different districts and parishes to see if there is an appetite to use the buildings. That is opening up the discussion about the possibility of community groups or volunteers taking over at children's centres."

Pals set up club event to honour late resident DJ

Charity night will host former musician's favourite acts to remember his love for music

A FORMER DJ, who lost his life in a road accident three years ago, will be remembered with a charity club night in Banbury on Saturday.

Matt Suttle, from Banbury, died in March 2012, after the car he was driving crashed near Overthorpe.

Three years on, friends Richard Woodall and Chris Farr, with the blessing of Mr Suttle's family, have organised a star-studded club event in his honour.

Mr Suttle was a resident DJ for the pair, who used to promote club nights in Banbury.

Mr Woodall, who grew up in Adderbury and has been promoting events for 20 years, said: "I knew Matt for quite a few years and he was always very kind and helpful towards everyone.

"When I first started out promoting, Matt was always by my side, standing in for other artists or helping me give out flyers.

"Matt loved music. He was always going on about the artists he liked, so we thought this would be an appropriate thing to organise for him."

DJs invited to perform at the Mill Arts Centre on Saturday include Mr Switch, named World DJ champion three times, and drum and bass group E-Z Rollers.

Mr Woodall, 40, said: "We came up with the idea of organising an event for him and inviting all his favourite DJs.

"We asked his family. They have been really supportive and helpful.

"All the artists have really supported us as well, along with many other friends of Matt's with providing equipment. It really is going to be a huge show."

Matt Suttle, a DJ around Banbury, was a friend of the daughter of Helen Hodgkins, who started a clean water fund

All profits will go to the Helen Hodgkins Trust, which helps provide clean drinking water to people in Africa.

The charity, based in Church Lane, Banbury, was started by Helen Hodgkins, whose daughter was a friend of Mr Suttle.

The pair are hoping to raise at least £5,000 for the charity.

Mr Woodall said: "If it wasn't for Matt, I would not be doing what I am doing now. He was such a great friend and it is fantastic to be able to do this in his honour."

The event starts at 6.30pm. Tickets cost £15 plus booking fee. They are available to buy from The Mill box office and skiddle.com.

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Cherwell's time after bid to double Woodstock refused

CAMPAIGNERS against a housing estate that would double the size of Woodstock "have won the battle but not yet the war" after West Oxfordshire District Council rejected the plans.

Proposals for 1,200 homes, a primary school, a care village and a football ground were turned down last week but are due to be decided by Cherwell District Council today, as the site covers both areas.

Pye Homes first put forward plans for 1,500 new homes Blenheim Palace estate land east of Woodstock. In June, it gave a smaller option of 1,200 homes. Woodstock has about 1,300 homes. Woodstock Action Group strongly opposed the scheme and more than 1,200 people objected.

Chairman Bob McGurrin said: "It feels like we have won the battle, but we have not won the war yet. Cherwell still have to make their decision."

WODC turned down the plans on grounds including the size would harm a World Heritage Site and it was "disproportionate and inappropriate."

The majority of the houses are within Cherwell, where planners have recommended refusal. Pye Homes did not offer a comment.

Woodstock campaigners spreading the word, from left, Bob McGurrin, Philip Redpath and Sharone Parnes

Safety action plea for one of county's riskiest roads

MP fears drivers going too fast on straight stretches of A361 face tight bends in villages

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WORK must be done to reduce the risk to drivers travelling on one of Oxfordshire's most dangerous roads, according to one of the county's MPs.

The A361 between Banbury and Chipping Norton was named the eighth highest risk road in the country in a report by the Road Safety Foundation.

The report, released on September 15, states that 40 crashes happened on the 21km stretch of road between 2008 and 2013.

The MP for North Oxfordshire, Victoria Prentis, said: "I know that this is an issue of great importance to many people in North Oxfordshire and I have met with residents and parish councils to discuss specific locations in more detail.

"I was disappointed to hear that the A361 had been graded such a dangerous road.

"I can see how this is so, given some of the very tight village bends and the speed at which some drivers travel along the open stretches.

"I will be raising this matter in the coming weeks with the Department for Transport and will continue to liaise with concerned parties."

The Road Safety Foundation is a charity that helps to reduce traffic casualties by improving roads, vehicles and driver behaviour.

According to the report, the number of "fatal or serious" crashes on the route had increased from 16 between 2008 and 2010 to 24 between 2011 and 2013.

Out of the 24 crashes, 46 per cent had pedestrians or cyclists as the main contributor to the incident.

Nearly one in 10 incidents was as a result of head-on collisions between vehicles.

Oxfordshire county councillor David Nimmo Smith, lead member for the environment and transport, said: "We are aware of some roads that are more statistically dangerous than others and we are continually monitoring these when we can.

North Oxfordshire MP Victoria Prentis, inset, says she intends to raise the problem of the dangers identified on the stretch of the A361 between Banbury and Chipping Norton with the Department for Transport and concerned parties in coming weeks

"To combat these problems it is important that we continue to try and slow traffic down."

In 2010, a motorcyclist was killed on the route near Banbury when his motorbike was involved in an accident with a BMW car.

The following year, the road became blocked after a driver in his 40s crashed his car into a hedge.

Nationally, the report said, 1,775 people were killed on Britain's roads in 2014, compared with 1,713 in 2013.

Half of the fatal crashes occurred on rural roads, which also had 30 per cent of serious crashes.

Vegetables and fruit to be given to help needy

A NEW community-led initiative in Banbury is encouraging people to donate unwanted fruit and vegetables to charities.

Harvest Banbury will be helping growers pick their own crops, so they can give as much or as little as they want to charities, groups and residents.

The project has been organised by Sanctuary Housing and Banbury Community Action Group, which provides funding and support for events.

Food donated will help charities including the Hill Youth, which offers activities for young people, and the Sunshine Children's Centre.

A juicing evening will be held on Monday, October 12, at the Hill Youth and Community Centre, where donated food will be transformed into healthy and colourful drinks for people to take home.

It has been funded by the Sanctuary Group's Cherish Cherwell Fund, which supports residents living in housing provided by the group.

Sanctuary Housing's Kate Winstanley said: "This is a unique project for Banbury and a lovely example of a community-led initiative.

"For those who have too much fruit and veg, or are struggling with harvesting their produce, this is a great way of sharing and ensuring food does not go to waste."

Residents interested should email banburycag@gmail.com or call Kate Winstanley on 0800 1313348.

Fault takes most of two councils' websites offline

PEOPLE trying to access Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council websites were left frustrated after both went down over the weekend.

County council spokesman Owen Morton said its site went down on Friday afternoon. The city council uses the same server, so was also affected.

Mr Morton apologised for any inconvenience caused and added that a small number of online services had still been available.

He said people with an adult social care emergency could call 0800 833408 if they could not get online.

Farm reaps rewards for pupils' educational visits

A DAIRY farm has won a national farming award for its work hosting educational visits.

Rectory Farm in Epwell, near Banbury, scooped up the Future of Farming Champion prize at the Bayer / FACE awards.

Iona and Chris Corbett, who run the farm, were rewarded for improving young people's understanding of the food and farming sector, enabling them to make a career in the industry.

The farm has developed links with local schools and offers visits to explore milking, feeding, animal husbandry and calving.

Mrs Corbett said: "I believe the programme is giving students a chance to succeed and also motivating them to look at farming as a serious career choice."

The awards are organised by charitable organisation Farming and Countryside Education and crop science company Bayer CropScience and were presented by BBC presenter and journalist Tom Heap at a ceremony in London.

National education officer at FACE Janet Hickinbottom said: "At the judging stage, we do not know what to expect, but we are never disappointed. Far from it. We are overwhelmed by the stories we hear of the tremendous work being carried out by farmers and farm educators.

"The awards are an opportunity to shine a light on these often unacknowledged individuals who are doing so much to help children and young adults understand the connection between farming and their daily lives."

Determined Scout Kyle, 13, raises £700 for troop

Boy opts to carry on independently, after group's fundraising 15-mile town walk has to be cancelled

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WHEN Kyle Walton found out his Scout group's 15-mile charity walk had been cancelled, he decided to complete the challenge single-handedly.

The 7th Banbury Scout Group had organised a walk to take place on September 6, in a bid to raise money for the troop's activities.

However, due to too many of the members being away on their summer holidays in the run-up to the trek, their walk had to be cancelled.

After collecting about £700 in sponsorship, 13-year-old Kyle asked his father, Gary, whether he could still take on the challenge.

The pair then persuaded Beavers leader Jon Poulton to join Kyle on the planned walk route and verify his time.

Kyle said: "I thought it would still be good to raise this money for the group, as they really need the funds.

"The money will support all the group's activities and it is amazing to have raised this much."

The walk started off from St Mary's Primary School in Southam Road, Banbury, before heading along Salt Way into Bodicote, then back past the Giant's Caves on Broughton Road.

The pair completed the course in just under five-and-a-half hours.

Kyle, who joined the 7th Banbury Scout Group when he was five years old, said: "The first 10 miles were okay, as we went through Banbury, but after that they became quite hard work."

His father said: "Kyle was gutted when he found out the walk had been cancelled. He had only got the forms a few days before and had already raised lots of money.

"After he told me he wanted to do it, we found someone who was willing to walk with him, and luckily Jon Poulton said he could do it.

"Kyle was well made up afterwards and I'm so proud of him."

Banbury boy Kyle Walton, 13, taking on his 15-mile sponsored walk for the Scouts

Improvement in officers' fitness

ONLY two per cent of Thames Valley's police officers failed their annual fitness test, new figures show.

Nearly 4,000 officers, including special constables and inspectors, took the nationally-required examination, with just 81 unable to pass and 61 getting through at the second attempt. One officer failed the endurance section four times.

In 2014, the test was made compulsory and the force has since improved on the 127 who failed in its first year.

Previously, only officers in their probation period and those in specialist roles that required a certain level of fitness took the test.

The main challenge is a bleep test, which requires running between two points set 15 metres apart. The speed is dictated by a bleep, which gets shorter and shorter as the levels progress. To pass, officers must reach a score of 5.4.

The level changes according to specialist roles, with a firearms officer needing to reach 7.6, for example.

Graham Smith, chairman of the force's Police Federation, which represents officers, said the test was unfair on older, more experienced members of the force.

He said: "The test should be age and gender specific. A 20-year-old would pass without a problem, but a 50-year-old is going to struggle unless they have made superhuman efforts to stay fit. They cannot do a bleep test, but they should still be able to serve the public."

Police spokeswoman Connie Primmer said: "It is excellent that the vast majority of officers who took the fitness test have passed. Having a basic standard of fitness enables officers to perform their frontline duties to achieve the best possible outcomes in reducing crime."

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Film shines light on museum's study into mirror from Iron Age

Insight after grants and public donations raise £33k to keep find in UK

Michael Race
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A DOCUMENTARY about the research into an Iron Age bronze mirror will be released to tell people more about the rare artefact.

Staff at the Oxfordshire Museum want to use the film to explain hidden secrets behind the 2,000-year-old mirror, which has been on display at the Woodstock centre since December.

Oxfordshire filmmaker Sharon Woodward, from Banbury, said she jumped at the chance to work with the museum and choreograph the film.

She added: "I was commissioned last year and I thought it would be really interesting to document and I had worked with the museum before.

"I'm quite interested in the mythology of it. It was amazing to see the mirror up close and watch the experts take a sample of it to analyse.

"I love making these sort of documentaries. They are quite fascinating and one of my aims is to get things like this out to audiences not just in Oxfordshire but around the world."

The eight-minute documentary will be shown at 8.45pm on Monday on UK Freeview 63, Sky 536, Virgin 233 and Freesat 651, before being shown alongside the display at the museum.

David Moon, curator of archaeology for Oxfordshire Museums service, said the short film would explain to the people of Oxfordshire – who helped purchase the artefact – the findings of the research.

He said: "As we had such a public campaign to buy the mirror we felt it was very important that we should document the research we wanted to do.

The rare bronze mirror, dating from the Iron Age, found near Didcot

"We decided having a film about it was the right thing to do because as well as creating a permanent and public record of the sampling process, we can use it in a variety of ways, such as showing it to groups, using it in gallery exhibitions or broadcasting it.

"It's the people of Oxfordshire who own it so we wanted to show them what we were doing."

Experts have also analysed the mirror and another from Bedfordshire and found that the two had probably been made in the same place at the same time and from the same molten Bronze.

The findings are not shown in the film, as they were returned after shooting. The research and film both had Higher Education Innovation Fund grants.

He added: "We were very lucky to be offered the chance to compete for the HigherEIF funding which paid for both the research and the film, and even luckier to be one of the five winning projects.

"After a lot of thought and consulting, we decided that we wanted to take a sample from the mirror.

"By taking a sample we would get a massive amount of extra information, not just about the chemical composition of the mirror but about the manufacturing processes too."

The artefact was found by a metal detectorist in Didcot in 2006, and the museum raised £33,000 by September last year to purchase and house it.

The short film was choreographed by Banbury filmmaker Sharon Woodward and will be screened on Monday at 8.45pm on various channels (see story)

Youth group issues third arts magazine

A YOUTH group has released its third issue of a new arts magazine designed to support young people across Oxfordshire.

The magazine by Oxfordshire Youth, called *Generation Muse*, was created by young people all across the county.

It aims to link children and teenagers with the available arts and cultural offerings in their community.

The first edition was published in January, after Oxfordshire Youth received funding from the county council. It is the first county-wide arts magazine for young people.

The youth company provides young people with the opportunities to be the best they can be and works closely with them to create content for the magazine.

Youth design consultant Chantelle Mak said: "It has made me more confident in myself and my art."

Youth editor Lydia Leece added: "It's opened my mind to creativity."

The magazine can be picked up from libraries, galleries, museums and youth spaces all across Oxfordshire. Issue four is due to be released in November.

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director James Miller feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 10 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and James is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

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Thousands tour market on its magical first night

Revellers entertained with activities from swing-jazz to walking tours and magician

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

MORE than 2,000 people enjoyed a family evening out at Banbury's first Night Market.

The event was organised by Banbury Presents and featured street food stalls, walking tours and magic shows.

Banbury-based gypsy swing-jazz band Scaramouche provided live music.

Tim Tarby-Donald, of Banbury Presents, said: "The turnout last week was unbelievable.

"There were lots of children enjoying themselves with their mums and dads, which was nice.

"It was like being in Covent Garden and the reaction that we've got so far has been very positive.

"We are still learning the ropes with these kinds of events, but, hopefully, we'll have the chance to organise another one."

Visitor Lauren Murrey praised the event on Facebook, saying: "Fantastic evening. Great, relaxed, family night out. Would love to see more events like this."

Sian Webber posted: "This was a fantastic event and looking forward to the next one."

Banbury Presents was formed by Cherwell District Council officers and arts and entertainment specialists Planet Neptune.

It runs a programme of performances, exhibitions, arts events and outside activities.

More than 2,000 people turned out for Banbury's first Night Market, held last Friday, and tried a range of continental food and drink on the stalls

Linking suppliers with contractors

CONSTRUCTION companies in Oxfordshire are being invited to find out about upcoming work contracts worth millions.

Supply chain management firm Constructionline is hosting a free event at the Kassam Stadium, Oxford, on October 8, to provide introductions to teams from large contractors in the area.

Those already signed up include Mears, Hill Construction, Bouygues UK, Reading Borough Council and the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Speller Metcalfe will be recruiting for projects on Sovereign Housing's £320 million framework, which will deliver a new-build housing programme in Oxfordshire over the next four years.

Decision-makers from organisations will give presentations on impending work, as well as providing advice on bidding.

The event is from 8.30am to 2pm. For details, see constructionline.co.uk.

Flat blaze put out

FIREFIGHTERS tackled a blaze that spread thick black smoke out of the windows of a ground floor flat in Banbury.

Fire crews from Banbury, Deddington and Hook Norton were sent to the accidental fire in Verney Road at 11.45am on Tuesday last week.

They searched the building but no one was inside.

Fans were used to clear the building of smoke.

Station manager David Bray, who attended the scene, said: "Fortunately, no one was in the premises and working smoke alarms were operating when firefighters arrived."

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Towpath bursts to life for canal festival time

Dancing Duck narrowboat, a steamboat and flotilla of canoeists set to take part in an extravaganza on the water

Looking forward to Canal Day, from left, Sovereign Wharf owner Ian Marris, Derek and Pat Thomas, Kieron Mallon and Tooley's Matt Armitage

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

THE SUN is set on shine on boaters and visitors on Sunday for this year's Banbury Canal Day.

The festival, which takes place on the Oxford Canal beside the Castle Quay shopping centre, will begin at 10.30am, when the Dancing Duck narrowboat makes its way along the water followed by a steamboat and a flotilla of canoeists.

Visitors will be able to move around the site by boats and water taxis.

Boating enthusiast Pat Thomas said she would be organising the boat trips this year, replacing Ron and Mary Heritage, who had been organisers for years previously, before having to step down due to ill-health.

Mrs Thomas, from Southampton, said: "I was a volunteer for the first time last year and I was amazed by the pop-up nature of the event.

"The whole place seems much quieter the rest of the time, but for one day it just comes alive for the festival."

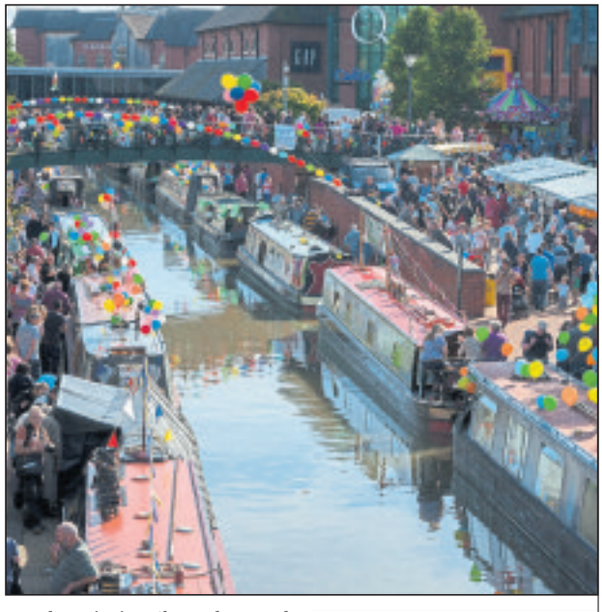
There will be four boats in operation, each transporting passengers from the Sovereign Wharf to Tooley's Boatyard.

She said: "We have about 30 volunteers, many of whom have worked here at the festival for many years.

"There will also be live music and performances for people to enjoy."

She added that Mr and Mrs Heritage would be a "tough act" to follow, but she was grateful for the opportunity to take on their work.

Boat trips are free, but donations will support the work of the Inland Waterways Association, which campaigns for the use, maintenance and restoration of all Britain's inland waterways.



Scenes from the 2013 Canal Day, with David Joy in the forge, above; a decorated waterway and vehicle

Banbury Town Council leader Kieron Mallon said: "This event is now bigger and better than ever and is now a must-attend event for anyone in Banbury interested in boating.

"This is one of the most well-attended events in North Oxfordshire, probably because it offers something for everyone.

"The canalside will be full of people enjoying themselves and we urge everyone to come along and take part."

Tooley's Boatyard will be displaying old engines and boats, with a chance for visitors to watch a blacksmith at work.

The Mill Arts Centre will open its doors for entertainment and food while General Foods' garden will host a free folk concert adjacent to the towpath.

This year's theme will be Colours Of The Rainbow.

The event will run until 5pm.

Charity calls for eye tests within special schools

A NATIONAL charity is appealing for the government to start providing routine sight tests in Oxfordshire's special schools.

New statistics published by SeeAbility have shown an estimated 382 pupils being educated at special schools in the county have never had an eye test, out of a total of 1,032 children being educated in them.

The charity said this meant vulnerable children, with a range of disabilities, seemed to be missing out on their education because they could not access sight tests.

It also said the situation was particularly concerning because children with complex learning disabilities were 28 times more likely to suffer from serious sight problems than other children.

The statistics have been produced for a new report from the charity, as part of its Children in Focus campaign.

It draws on research from Cardiff University's school of optometry and vision science.

SeeAbility has trialled delivering specialist sight tests to pupils in a cluster of special schools in London since October 2013.

Charity chief executive David Scott-Ralphs said: "Children with profound disabilities may not be able to tell someone they have a sight problem, or get to a high street optician.

"Let's bring much-needed eye care to them instead.

"We want people to join our Children in Focus Campaign and sign the petition on our website."

Details of the SeeAbility petition can be found at http://www.seeability.org/petition.

Nursing homes told they must improve by CQC

A STRING of nursing homes across the county have been told they need to improve, after a series of swoops by health watchdog inspectors.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has published its findings into five care providers including a nursing home, mental health support, and illness and injury rehabilitation across Oxfordshire.

Its inspectors found that AG Palmer House in Littlemore, Oasis Private Care in Steventon, Southerndown nursing home outside Chipping Norton, Middleton Grange nursing home in Hailey and The Triangle in Wheatley "required improvement".

C3 Care, in Watlington, was the only care provider in the latest string of inspections to be rated good.

While Oasis Private Care – which provides illness and injury rehabilitation homecare – was rated good for being caring and responsive, it was told it required improvements in safety and effectiveness and its leadership was ranked inadequate.

Inspectors found that mental health homecare agency AG Palmer House required improvement in all five areas: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well led.

Middletown Grange and The Triangle required improvements in safety, efficacy, responsiveness and leadership, while it ranked its caring as good.

Southerndown was rated good for caring, effectiveness and well led, but required improvements in caring and responsiveness.

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Germany's marvellous wine celebration

4 days from £229.00, 12 August 2016

Imagine a land of rolling hills, fairytale castles and picturesque medieval towns transformed at night by brilliant fireworks. This is the 'Rhine in Flames,' a series of summer festivals that culminate in an explosion of colour.

Highlights & inclusions

- Scenic Rhine Valley excursion
- Visit to Koblenz
- Visit to Rudesheim
- An evening at the Rhine in Flames
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The world's most beautiful spring garden

4 days from £249.00, 17 & 21 April 2016

The breathtaking colour and floral magic of the world famous Keukenhof Gardens, a full day in the lively Dutch capital Amsterdam, with its canals and cobblestones, and a visit to the beautiful Belgian city of Bruges, the delightful 'Venice of the North', are the highlights of this wonderful break.

Highlights & inclusions

- Entrance to Keukenhof Gardens
- A visit to Amsterdam
- A visit to picturesque Bruges
- Three nights' bed and continental breakfast accommodation in a three-star hotel near Keukenhof
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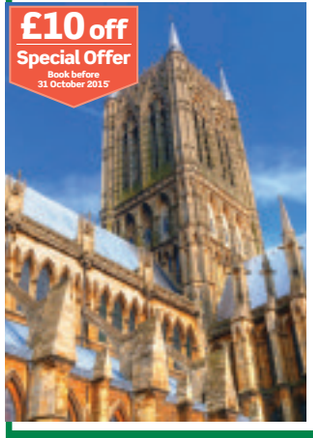

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Highlights & inclusions

- Entrance to Castle Howard
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- Visit to the charming market town Beverley
- Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast accommodation in a good hotel in the Humberside/East Yorkshire area
- Coach travel from the local area
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Floralies of Medieval Ghent

A unique horticultural spectacular

3 days from £219.00, 29 April 2016

Don't miss this opportunity to join us in the medieval city of Ghent, to see the breath-taking Floralies.

Highlights & inclusions

- A visit with entrance to the Floralies horticultural spectacular in Ghent
- A visit to Bruges
- Two nights' bed and continental breakfast accommodation in a good hotel within 40 miles of Ghent
- Coach travel from the local area and return Channel crossings
- Escorted by a friendly tour manager

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Trust fires on all cylinders

On the eve of retirement, hospitals chief Sir Jonathan Michael looks at his career

Joe Gammie
jgammie@nqo.com

A JUNIOR doctor working 100-hour weeks hears the call come in, jumps from his dormitory bed and dives out of the door into total blackness.

It takes the young Sir Jonathan Michael a minute to realise that he is not in the corridor, but has clambered inside a wardrobe.

The outgoing chief executive of Oxfordshire's hospitals laughs across the table in his office, recalling the anecdote, but it could have gone so differently for the doctor of 45 years.

Sir Jonathan was raised in Bristol, got A-levels in English, French and history and had a place at uni to study social sciences.

But the course of his life changed when he went to see a film, the name of which now escapes him, set in a hospital in America.

He said: "It triggered something in me and I recall coming back from the cinema and saying to my parents, 'I want to do medicine'."

So Sir Jonathan wrote to medical schools and was invited to an interview at St Thomas' in London. He qualified in 1970 and rose through the ranks. He has been a chief executive for nearly 20 years, since taking the top job at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital in 1995.

Getting his annual flu jab in 2013 from occupational health manager Patricia Poole, left; celebrating the 50th anniversary of the League of Friends at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre with volunteer Jean Burley

He said: "I was asked to work with the chief as a medical director, to make sure the financial recovery didn't crucify clinical care.

"That was a difficult period, but in one sense a good learning experience in that I knew what a bankrupt health organisation looks like and how painful it is to pull it out."

He moved to London to be chief executive of Guy's and St Thomas' Trust and steer it through its bid to become a foundation trust.

After a three-year break working with BT Health, he became chief executive of the then Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals Trust.

Remembering his arrival, the car buff said: "An organisation in Oxford ought to be like a Ferrari. Everyone knows it is absolutely the top. When I arrived, it looked like a Ferrari but was not firing on all cylinders.

"I hope I have played my little part in moving the academic health system in Oxford to a slightly higher plain."

Sir Jonathan said that when he took over in 2010 he wanted to improve the relationship between clinicians and management and escape a financial deficit.

He added: "That's one of the advantages I find of being an ex-consultant. I have been there and done that, and got the T-shirt and the blood stains."

The trust achieved the status of academic health science centre in 2013 and has gone from a financial deficit to a surplus.

It was renamed Oxford University Hospitals Trust (OUHT) in 2011. His successor will be Dr Bruno Holthof.

Sir Jonathan Michael reflects on his career ahead of his retirement from the hospitals

£1,000 art boost

OXON: Sick children and patients can get creative after a £1,000 arts and crafts cash injection.

The Oxford University Hospitals Trust has had a donation of arts materials from the WHSmith Trust.

Kits will be available for patients of all ages, after research showed that artistic activities can help boost recovery.

OUHT director of development and the estate Mark Trumper said: "It is a fantastic initiative and the large volume of arts and crafts materials will be used and enjoyed by many of our patients and their families."

United business

OXON: Oxford United Football Club has agreed to become a main partner of the Oxfordshire Chamber of Commerce.

Club staff will attend business networking events, while the chamber has pledged to help the club promote commercial and community opportunities to members. They will work on joint initiatives to increase membership for both the chamber and the football club's United in Business programme, which was launched in 2014.

Railway rebrands

OXON: First Great Western has been rebranded as GWR, in a nod to its roots as the Great Western Railway, built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in the 1830s. A green colour scheme on trains and staff uniforms will follow.

Leading way with man's best friend

Canine capers, meaning all things doggie, provides fun in the sun at People's Park

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A RANGE of four-legged friends got their moment in the spotlight as Banbury hosted its first Bark in the Park on Sunday.

The day, held in People's Park, was organised by Banbury's town mayor Tony Mepham and the mayoress, his wife Lesley, as a celebration of dogs and other four-legged pets.

Mr Mepham, who owns two dogs called Yogi and Buster, said: "We had seen novelty dog shows before and thought this would be great to do for residents.

"From talking to people in the street, it seemed like many were going to get involved."

Dogs for disabled people, guide dogs and hearing dogs were all invited to the afternoon to show how pets can help their owners.

Vets were also on hand to give advice.

Banbury Town Council's civic officer Tricia Campbell said: "It was a great opportunity for families to have a day out with their pets, and the turnout was quite superb."

Visitors also enjoyed a fun fair, fundraising and food stalls.

The event ended with a parade that saw hundreds of pets walking and being carried around the arena. Prizes were given to best male and female animals, as well as a doggie hamper for best in show.

The Banbury Bark in the Park day, which took place last Sunday, attracted pets of all shapes and size, who were brought along by their owners to enjoy a canine carnival orchestrated by the town's mayor, Tony Mepham

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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

Pippa Greenwood: *The Gardener's World* and *Gardener's Question Time* presenter will give a talk entitled Grow Great Veg and Have Fun at Benson Village Hall, Sunnyside. There will be tea, cake and a raffle. 7.30pm. £8 on the door. 01865 858512.

Ramblers' walk: Seven-mile walk between Ewelme and Cookley Green via Swyncombe. Meet at the junction of Swan's Way, Ewelme. 10am. 01865 890829.

SATURDAY

Family history fair: The Marlborough School, Shipton Road, Woodstock. Oxfordshire Family History Society advisers will help visitors search records to get information about their ancestors. Also, books, CDs, maps, postcards and materials from specialist companies will be on sale. Refreshments available. See www.ofhs.org.uk/fair.html for the latest confirmed stall holders. 10am. Free entry. 01488 71714.

History exhibition: Harwell Village Hall, High Street. The exhibition looks at the history of Harwell, including wartime memorabilia. Refreshments available. Saturday 10am-4pm and Sunday 11am-4pm. Free admission. 01235 861057.

Art exhibition: The Red Lion, Chapel Lane, Blewbury. A new art exhibition by local artist Janet Hewson, who has combined digital technology with traditional art methods to produce 16 one-off pieces. All profits will go to the Blewbury Village Hall Restoration Fund and a local arts charity, The Tony Loy Trust. 12pm. Free. 01235 850075.

Jumble and bric-a-brac sale: Bargains for all the family, with refreshments available at Wootton Village Hall, near Woodstock, to raise money for the village primary school. 3pm. 20p admission. 01993 812423.

Charity race night: The Marlborough Club, 227 Broadway, Didcot. Supporting Play2Give for local charities including Oxford Children's Hospital and Headway Oxfordshire. Free entry. Raffle, burger van and disco. 7.30pm. 07547 412694.

Family bushcraft: The Hill End Centre, Eynsham Road, Farmoor. Make and bake bread on a campfire in the woods and explore Hill End's 65 acres. Wear suitable outdoor clothing and bring a waste-free lunch to supplement the bread you make. Book by e-mail at friendsofhillend@gmail.com and pay on the day. 10am. Adults £6, children £3. 07982 439828.

Coffee morning: Methodist Chapel, Bridge Street, Bampton. Lots of exciting stalls including new and nearly new Christmas decorations. Teddy tombola, bric-a-brac, books and cakes etc. 10am. Entry 50p to include a beverage and biscuit. 01993 702561.

Autumn fair: Cumnor Village Hall, Leys Road. Come and browse the many stalls selling contemporary gifts and crafts, plus meet the artists. Refreshments served. Proceeds to St Michael's Church, Cumnor. 10am. 01865 863124.

SUNDAY

Animal blessing service: St John Vianney Church, Charlton Road, Wantage. Animals and their human friends of all ages are invited to a special service to mark the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. All are welcome to teas, dog biscuits and carrots afterwards in the church hall. 3pm. Contact Wanda Oberman on 01235 868516.

Banbury Canal Day: This annual celebration of the canal is an event that attracts boaters, crafters, traders and visitors from all over the country. There will be boat trips and entertainment, with General Foods hosting a free folk concert adjacent to the towpath. The Mill Arts Centre opens its doors for a day of entertainment, food and drink, including free drop-in activity day for families, creating a large collage incorporating scenes, characters and images from Alice in Wonderland. There will beer and food outlets. 10.30-5pm. Free entry.

Flea market and collectors fair: Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary, Old Didcot Road, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. Varied stalls and refreshments. 10am. 50p. Pitches available from £10 (tables supplied), with setting up from 8am. Book at 01491 833938 or see www.donkeyrescue.org.uk

Autumn Water Festival: Earth Trust, Little Wittenham. A celebration of autumn, harvest and our use of water, with lots of fun facts and watery activities for all the family. Don't forget your wellies. 11am. £5, children £2, families £12. See earthtrust.org.uk/whatson or call 01865 407792.

Open mic night: The Beacon, Portway, Wantage. 6.30pm. If you would like to perform, email openmic@jtstageproductions.co.uk

Vintage bus and transport rally: Oxford Bus Museum, Station Approach, Long Hanborough. There will be free bus rides every 15 minutes on a selection of vintage vehicles from 10am-4pm, with buses, coaches, motorcycles and bicycles on display together with historic photographs, interactive displays and a 'playbus'. The Morris Motors Museum charts the story of William Morris and his motoring empire in Oxford. 10.30am. Adults £4.50, seniors £3.50, under 15s £2.50, families £10. 01993 811003.

TUESDAY

North Leigh History Society: North Leigh Memorial Hall, Park Road, North Leigh. Dr Janice Kinory will give a talk entitled The Salt Way from the Iron Age. 7.30pm. £4 for visitors. 01993 882301.

Art exhibitions: Opening of two displays at Vale and Downland Museum, Wantage. Jean Ramsdale, whose work is full of variety and colour, has a exhibition entitled *Art Through My Eyes* in the Upper Gallery, while textile artist Amanda Hislop is presenting *Land Lines and Forms* in the Dr VF Squires Room. Both exhibitions run until October 17. The museum is closed on Sundays.

Ocean Film Festival: Showing at Amey Theatre, Abingdon School in Park Road, as part of a world tour. Collection of short films document the beauty and power of the ocean, and celebrate divers, surfers, swimmers and oceanographers, showcasing the huge waves of Hawaii, diving with sharks off the coast of Africa and the far reaches of the Arctic Circle. 7.30pm. £12, concessions £10 from oceanfilmfestival.co.uk.

Sustainability talk: Old School Room, St Peter's Church, First Turn, Wolvercote. Dr Kerry Lock, head of research and skills at the Little Wittenham-based Earth Trust, will discuss the environmental learning charity's work at a meeting of the Ashmolean Natural History Society (ANHSO). 7.45pm. Visitors £2.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

WEDNESDAY

Food for Thought: The Partridge, St Mary's Street, Wallingford. The Treehouse School in Cholsey has teamed up with Wallingford-based company Triaster Ltd to host Food for Thought networking lunches for businesses. Meals will be prepared and served by the pupils of the independent, non-fee paying primary school. The initiative will be launched at a drinks reception on Wednesday at The Partridge Inn. 6.30pm. Free. 0870 402 1239.

Comedy

THURSDAY

Mark Thomas: The Theatre, Chipping Norton. The show *Trespass* carries on where Thomas's previous show *100 Acts of Minor Dissent* left off. He asks the question "How do we turn the skyscrapers and corporate squares into our playgrounds?". Expect his usual eclectic mix of theatre, stand-up comedy, activism, journalism and a dollop of mayhem. 7.45pm. Adults £16, concessions £14. 01608 642350

FRIDAY

Mark Thomas: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. 8pm. £15, concessions £13.50. 01235 515144.

SATURDAY

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: Four comics from the top of the UK and international comedy circuit. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 0400.

Jeremy Hardy: Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. The comedian has begun his fourth decade as a stand-up this year. He is also well known for his appearances on Radio Four's *Jeremy Hardy Speaks to the Nation*, *The News Quiz*, *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*. 8pm. £14, concessions £12.50, jobseekers £5. 01235 515144.

SUNDAY

Frisky and Mannish: Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. The musical comedy cabaret double act are back with a new show, having performed everywhere from Edinburgh Fringe to the West End and the Sydney Opera House. 8pm. £15. 01235 515144.

Theatre

THURSDAY

And This Is My Friend Mr Laurel: The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury. Fulfilling a long-held desire to pay tribute to his hero Stan Laurel, Jeffrey Holland – who played Spike in *Hi-De-Hi* – tells this intriguing and often poignant tale of one of Hollywood's great film comedians in a one-man show. It is set during Laurel's visit to dying comedy partner Oliver Hardy. 7.30pm. £15, concessions £13. 01295 279002.

FRIDAY

The Scarecrows' Wedding: Scamp Theatre performs this stage adaptation of the children's book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, at The Beacon, Portway, Wantage. In the story, Harry sets off to search for wedding day essentials ahead of his nuptials to fellow scarecrow Betty, but while he is away, his replacement, the dashing Reginald Rake, tries to steal the heart of his fiancee. Suitable for children aged three upwards and families. 4.30pm. £8 or £30 for a family of four. 01235 763456.

SUNDAY

Every Brilliant Thing: The Theatre, Chipping Norton. In the play, about depression and the lengths we will go to for those we love, a six-year-old child draws up a list of 'brilliant things' for his mother who suffers from depression. 7.45pm. Adults £14, concessions £12. 01608 642350.

WEDNESDAY

The Forest: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. Thea and Robin are drawn into the dark and mysterious forest and find themselves on an unexpected journey of self-discovery in this multi-sensory show designed especially for teenagers and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and their companions. For ages 12 upwards. Performances at 11.30am and 2pm. Limited places. £10, free for companions. 01235 515144.

Music

FRIDAY

U2UK: The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury. The tribute act perform the Irish rock band's top hits. 8pm. £15.50. 01295 279002.

Joe Holic: Angel, Market Square, Witney. Musical tour of hits old and new. 9pm. Free entry. 01993 703238.

SATURDAY

Jonny and the Jive Tones: Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington. More than 40 pop, soul and rock 'n' roll songs from the 1960s. 7.30pm. £7.50. 01865 376700.

A Seasonal Songbook: Chinnor Methodist Church, 62 Station Road, Chinnor. A vocal quartet of classically trained singers, accompanied by Marjorie Holliday on the piano, perform entertainment for Harvest Festival. All proceeds go to the church building fund. 7pm. Tickets £5, children £3, from Jane Honeyball 01844 351096 or Anne Marie Lord 01844 352120.

Raising the Deep: Celebration of the life of Matt Suttle, a popular Banbury man and DJ, aka DJ Maty, with profits going to Helen Hodgkins Trust. The event will take over the whole of The Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury, with Drum and Bass, House and more, including Mr Switch, four-time DMC world champion DJ. 6.30pm. £15 plus booking fee. 01295 279002.

Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir: Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford. The group holds a joint concert with Caldicot Male Voice Choir and the operatic duo of Charlotte Tetley and Sophie Pullen. It will feature traditional Welsh music, songs from the shows and the lighter operatic music. 7.30pm. £12. 01235 203929.

Bletchington Silver Band: Bletchingdon Village Hall, off Springwell Hill. The band stages its autumn concert, its first in the the new hall, with Gloucester Brass. 7.30pm. £5, concessions £3, under-12s free. See bletchingtonsilverband.co.uk

The Crown Singers: Church of St James, Church Street, West Hanney. The popular local chamber choir performs choral and instrumental music, together with The Ashford Baroque Ensemble. The programme will include Monteverdi's *Beatus Vir*, Purcell's *Welcome to all the Pleasures*; and a selection of other fine choral and instrumental baroque music. Interval refreshments will be available. 7.30pm. £10. 01235 868250.

Brass band concert: The Manor Preparatory School, Faringdon Road, Abingdon. Abbey Brass and Wantage B join forces to perform a mixture of popular and traditional music. 7.30pm. £7, concessions £5. 01235 820899.

John Otway: The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford. The veteran singer returns to the pub with his big band as part of his 63rd birthday celebrations. Support from Oxford troubadours The Beard of Destiny. 8pm. Tickets £10 in advance from wegottickets.com/event/306360, £12 on the door.

Jim Moray: The folk artist who uses electric instruments and sees pop, rock and folk all as parts of the same musical world will perform at Tiddy Hall, Shipton Road, Ascott-under-Wychwood. Support from Said the Maiden, who have been playing at some of the best-known folk clubs in the country. 8pm. £8 in advance from 01993 831427 or wychwoodfolkclub.com, £10 on the door.

Dance

THURSDAY

Sequence and ballroom dancing: Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford Street, Woodstock. Teaching from 7.30-8.45pm, practise what you have learned until 10.30pm. 7.30pm. £2. 01993 811473.

Witney Folk Dance Group: Madley Park Hall, Northfield Farm Lane, Witney. Learn English country dance. Beginners welcome. 8pm. £3 fee includes coffee and raffle. 01993 705961.

FRIDAY

Club Rio: Marlborough Club, Broadway, Didcot. Venue for over 30s featuring dance music from the 1970s to the present day. 9pm-1am. £5 07789 428795.

MONDAY

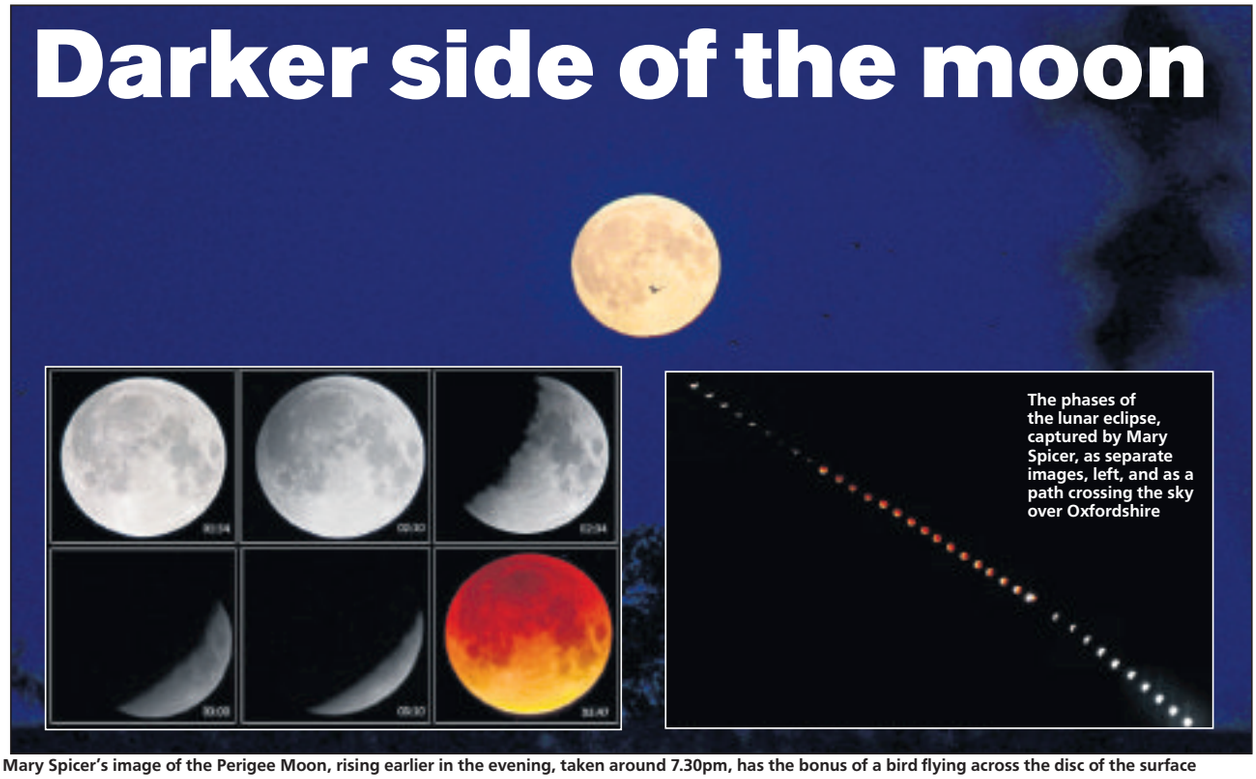
Scottish country dancing: The Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon. You can start any week. Beginners welcome and no partner needed. 8pm. £5 to join, then £2 each session. See https://abingdonscdc.wordpress.com or call 01235 528154 for further information.

Morris winter practice: Recreation Hall, Main Street, Long Hanborough. Masons Apron Northwest welcomes new and experienced dancers. The side has a full summer diary for local danceouts and festivals. Musicians also very welcome to join. 8.15pm. 01993 200717.

Darker side of the moon

Stargazers look to galaxies brought into view by this week's lunar phenomenon

Callum Keown
ckeown@nqo.com



The phases of the lunar eclipse, captured by Mary Spicer, as separate images, left, and as a path crossing the sky over Oxfordshire

Mary Spicer's image of the Perigee Moon, rising earlier in the evening, taken around 7.30pm, has the bonus of a bird flying across the disc of the surface

WHILE most stargazers were transfixed by the super 'blood moon' this week, one astronomer boldly looked beyond.

Celestial enthusiast Mary Spicer was able to catch a glimpse of the Milky Way as the moon dimmed in the early hours of the morning.

The unique sight was possible due to a lunar eclipse that combined with a 'supermoon', which happens when the moon is in the closest part of its orbit with the Earth and appears larger in the sky.

The spectacle began just after 1am, with the "total" phase – when the moon is completely in shadow – lasting from 3.11am to 4.24am.

Miss Spicer, 42, from Tackley near Bicester, was one of many who stayed up for the phenomenon, which last happened in 1982.

She said: "Normally, when there is a full moon, it's so bright it lights up the whole sky. As the moon became dimmer you could see things that you wouldn't otherwise see during a full moon.

"I could see the Milky Way and other stars around the moon. It was quite amazing."

Along with her fiancé, Mark McIntyre, she had three cameras pointing at the moon, taking time-lapse shots between 1am and 5am.

She said: "It started at about 1.10am, but there was not much to see in the first hour.

"Just after 2am, a black shadow started to stretch across the moon."

"The moon got dimmer and dimmer and started to look very red.

She added: "It was probably just after 4am that a slither of light emerged; it was a bit like dawn."

Roger Davies, the Philip Wetton Professor of Astrophysics at Oxford University, stepped outside his Kidlington house to get a better look at the eclipse.

He said: "It was a remarkable thing to see.

"The full moon is very bright, but this was red and had an ethereal quality to it.

"It was not quite dark enough for me to see the nearest galaxy to us in the Milky Way, but it made other constellations easier to view."

Professor Davies explained the moon appeared an orangey/red colour for the same reason the sun does when setting.

The light has to pass through the Earth's atmosphere – which contains air and dust – and is refracted (bent), producing the reddish tint.

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Raw, rugged and Scottish

MACBETH **(15, 113 mins) A thriller/romance with Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Sean Harris, David Thewlis and Paddy Considine. Director: Justin Kurzel**

THE Scottish play bares its teeth and draws blood in Justin Kurzel's muscular and unflinching adaptation that accentuates the carnage as the doomed title character is undone by grief and ambition.

This *Macbeth* is rugged and raw, stripped of some of Shakespeare's lyrical text for the sake of dramatic expediency and visual spectacle.

The film opens with a funeral, rather than the hurlyburly of the weird sisters, and Lady Macbeth is a brittle porcelain doll, likely to crack at the slightest emotional jolt, rather than a demented dynamo behind her husband's accession to the throne.

Kurzel chooses to linger on the slow-motion cut and thrust of swords scything through flesh in battle sequences that emphasize Macbeth's credentials as a fearless warrior.

Michael Fassbender is front and centre as the Thane of Glamis, whose encounter with a quartet of prophetic hags sets him on his ill-fated course.

The witches foretell his rise and coronation at the expense of King Duncan (David Thewlis). Aided by his wife (Marion Cotillard), Macbeth murders the monarch and frames his servants.

The king's son flees and friend Banquo (Paddy Considine) suspects Macbeth's trembling role. Macbeth turns his attention to rival Macduff (Sean Harris) and, in a harrowing scene, orders the execution of Lady Macduff and her children.

With its high body count and explosions of viscera, this is a battered and bruised reworking of a classic text, punctuated by moments of directorial brio.

Fassbender delivers a mesmerising performance of snarling intensity that overwhelms everyone else, not least Cotillard, who doesn't always seem comfortable with the iambic pentameter.

Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard play the leads in the latest big-screen adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, left, while Matt Damon is left stranded on Mars in director Ridley Scott's *The Martian*

THE MARTIAN **(12A, 141 mins) A sci-fi/thriller starring Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Sean Bean. Director: Ridley Scott**

IN SPACE, everyone can hear you scream and when Ridley Scott is directing, you can be certain his actors will issue bloodcurdling shrieks.

In the opening 15 minutes of *The Martian*, the director apparently kills off his leading man in a ferocious sandstorm on the red planet. Unusually, the hero survives and draws upon his scientific knowledge to sustain him until a rescue mission can be mustered.

The film opens with the crew of the Ares 3, led by Commander Lewis (Jessica Chastain), as sensors pick up an approaching storm. As they rush back to the ship, botanist Mark Watney (Matt Damon) is hit by debris and presumed dead.

The team blasts off, but Watney is alive. Nasa tries to let him know the cavalry is coming.

Scott employs the 3D format to dazzling effect, but this is primarily a meditation on the endurance of the human spirit.

Drew Goddard's lean script and lead actor Damon serve to hold us spellbound.

Cake Bookworm

Two Years, Eight Months And Twenty-Eight Nights **by Salman Rushdie, hardback by Jonathan Cape, £18.99 (ebook £7.50)**

MISCHIEVOUS, malevolent jinn (genies) interfere with the human world in Rushdie's new novel, which combines a recognisable near-future with the magical world of Arabian mythology.

The plot is fuelled by a fictional, centuries-long disagreement between historical Muslim philosophers Ghazali and Ibn Rushd, the latter of whom purportedly sired a small army of half-human children with the benevolent and fertile jinnia, Dunia. Descendants, who include a comic book artist and a gardener, must come together in a battle between followers of God and reason, played out over two years, eight months and 28 (or 1,001) nights. Rushdie channels the story of Scheherazade for this confusing, twisting novel, which nevertheless weaves readers into its tapestry of sex, death, ideas, arguments and human peccadillos.

His characters tell each other stories all the time, so their tales layer over each other. It sounds like a mess, but works tremendously well, with Rushdie both funny and inventive.

A Slanting Of The Sun **by Donal Ryan, hardback by Doubleday Ireland, £12.99 (ebook £6.02)**

In 2013, Donal Ryan won the *Guardian* first book award for his portrayal of post-crash small town Ireland, *The Spinning Heart*. This was followed up by the heart-breaking *The Thing About December*, and he returns now with a collection of short stories cut from the same cloth as his previous work; snapshots from lives, each thematically similar yet tightly contained in worlds of their own.

In the opening story, we meet a man just out of jail who forms a bond with the mother of the girl he ran over; there's the tale of a dedicated mother and wife (even here, Ryan makes the banal beautifully readable) with a shocking twist; an old man recalls a revenge killing's effect on his life. Love, loneliness and displacement all find a home in these stunning pages.

Where My Heart Used To Beat **by Sebastian Faulks, hardback by Hutchinson, £20 (ebook £8.03)**

LESS cinematic than his biggest hitters to date, *Birdsong* and *Charlotte Grey*, Sebastian Faulks here nicks away at his pet topics – memory, war, identity, psychology – and continues on a quest to write down every facet of trench life, lost love, broken remembrances and a century of mud and blood. It traces Robert Hendricks, a doctor and Second World War veteran, from the trenches of Italy to the arms of a nurse and an island where his story unspools under the prodding of a dying physician. The book leaves you feeling quite worn out.

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Banbury's Ollie Stanbridge was sent off against Bishops Cleeve

Stanbridge off in draw

Ten-man Puritans have to settle for a point

OLLIE Stanbridge was sent off as Banbury United had to settle for a 1-1 draw at home to Bishops Cleeve in Division 1 South & West of the Evo-Stik Southern League on Saturday.

Stanbridge got his marching orders six minutes from time for a second yellow card.

By that time the hosts, who had taken the lead early in the second half, were happy to hold on for a point.

Banbury had the edge in the first half, but created only one clear-cut chance when Duran Martin miskicked the ball from six yards out.

They went ahead on 50 minutes, when Mark Bell took a short corner and swapped passes with Nicholas Kalakoutis, before crossing for Louis Joyce to score with a majestic header.

The hosts seemed to be in control during the second half before Cleeve's Jordan Bryan was bundled over by Andy Gunn inside the penalty area in the 71st minute.

Shane Bumphrey stepped up to convert the resulting spot-kick, sending Puritans keeper Jack Harding the wrong way.

After Stanbridge had been sent off, the visitors nearly won it in stoppage time, when Elliott Kennedy smashed a 25-yard shot against a post, but Mike Ford's side held on to earn a point.

Banbury are tenth in the table with 14 points from nine games.

On Saturday, they welcome mid-table side Mangotsfield United to the Spencer Stadium.

Banbury Utd: Harding, White, Partner (Blackstock 76), Martin, Wise, Johnson, Gunn, Stanbridge, Joyce (Browne 69), Bell, Kalakoutis (Howards 59).
Attendance: 200.

Magnificent Mills excels in Bulls rout

JOE Mills crossed five times as league leaders Banbury scored 11 tries in a thumping 73-26 win over Bedworth in Midlands 2 West (South).

Tries from Mills and captain Ed Phillips gave Bulls an early 12-0 lead.

The hosts replied with a converted try, before the two sides exchanged scores.

Banbury then added three tries for a 40-14 lead at the break.

Bulls put a further five scores on the board in the second half, but were unable to prevent the hosts from earning a four-try bonus point.

Josh Deegan, Carl Daniels, Simon Brand, Sam Mills and Adam Walsh all went over for Banbury.

Alex Stephenson converted eight tries and Phillips one.

Bulls, the only side to have a 100 per cent record, are four points clear of second-placed Malvern after three games.

STARS with Claire Petulengro

Service provided by IMS Leeds LS1 8LB. Calls cost 60p per minute at all times

ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19
You'll find it increasingly hard to keep secrets over the coming seven days. It seems the pressure is on you to spill the beans my friend. New friendships can turn into so much more if you will just let down some of those defences. Come on Aries, you know you want to! Life can get very exciting if you do. Ring now to hear my starline in full.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20
You seem to be more worried about close ones than you do yourself lately and it may well be that you are waiting for news on the health and wellbeing of someone dear to you. Positive thinking can and will bring about positive results, so try to remember that the glass is half full. Ring now to hear who's only been telling you half truths recently.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20
It would seem that many people in your professional world are not acting in a professional way. Take a step back and try to work out who really holds the power as it could well be that you've been giving power to those who don't actually deserve it. Time spent with Scorpios helps you solve major personal issues. Ring now for the full story.

0906 585 4362

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22
You want to relax but you're finding it increasingly difficult to make you a priority. Could it be that you've begun believing the lies that certain individuals have been feeding you? Don't lack confidence. Saturn is on hand to ensure that you make your life everything you dream, plus more. Ring now to hear who is a match made in heaven for you.

0906 585 4363

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22
It's time to find new things to inspire you Leo. Life has recently seen a series of strange events which have left you feeling out of control and unable to alter your own destiny. That is no longer the case and from Wednesday you start to realise what needs to be done to feel like you again. Ring now to hear how love is about to pleasantly surprise you.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22
Love and relationships come to the fore and you start to see with ease who is good for you and who has been dragging you down. News from far away makes you smile and gives you reason to look forward to the winter months. Dress well this week please. You'll be bumping into people you're going to want to impress. Ring for more news.

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
You have such a kind and caring nature that it is often all too easy for others to take advantage of you. One person in particular has done this far too often and this week sees you telling them what you really think of them. News from the younger generation gives you reason to worry less. Call now to hear what drama Mars is planning.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
Money worries may have gotten on top of you, but that's only because you've avoided facing them. Sit down and do your sums before Thursday and you'll soon have reason to feel positive about future financial dealings. Fellow Scorpios can and should be trusted with the secrets you're keeping. Ring now to hear what magic Pisces adds to October.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21
All areas of your life start to tick along far more steadily and you are able to predict for yourself which aspects need help and which you can pay less attention to. Last minute invites take a friendship to a whole new level and you finally start to put more fun into your life again. Ring now to hear why it's worth re-reading contracts you've received.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
Many of you Capricorns have been experiencing rather intense mood swings and you may find it hard to know how you're going to act on a day to day basis. A family matter appears to be at the root of these unpredictable feelings, but events which occur by Friday put you firmly back in control of your positive emotions. Ring now so I can support and help you.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
You're back Aquarius! Back from those rather strange emotions which made for such a difficult start to the month of October. Thanks to Mercury, you begin to communicate with close ones and you feel better equipped to deal with those who brought you down in September. Ring now to hear how surprises in love make this your most exciting month.

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PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20
Your career comes under the spotlight and you start to see with clarity and ease where you have been going wrong. Fellow Pisces can help you to get the job done, so make sure you seek them out. Much good can come at this time from finishing what you start in business. Your reputation in fact, depends on it. Call now to make life the best it can be.

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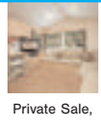

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In brief

- **A DISPLAY of important British single-seaters raced by Sir Stirling Moss will be on show at Classic & Sports Car – The London Show (October 30 to November 1) at Alexandra Palace. While Moss raced hundreds of different machines in dozens of different categories, including single-seaters, touring cars, sportscars and rally cars, all over the world in his career, it was his dedication to promoting Britain and its racing industry that was unrivalled. Iconic machines from Cooper, Lotus, Ferguson and Vanwall will be on display, with more than 300 of the world's most prestigious classic cars from world-famous collectors and world-renowned classic car retailers. For more information and tickets, see classicandsportscarshow.com**
- **SKODA is preparing itself for a busy end to 2015, with soaring fleet sales and the launch of the new Superb. The brand's fleet team is experiencing unprecedented demand for its range of models, with corporate and SME (small and medium enterprises) sales up 22 per cent when compared with 2014.**

Mondeo a model of fuel economy

Auto facts

Model: Ford Mondeo Zetec 1.6 Econetic TDCI
Price: £22,095
Insurance group: 17E (1-50)
Fuel consumption (Combined): 78.5mpg
Top speed: 119mph
Length: 487.1cm/192n
Width: 185.2cm/73in
Luggage capacity: 19 cu ft
Fuel tank capacity: 13.6 gallons/62 litres
CO2 emissions: 94g/km
Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles

David Duffy
david.duffy@nqo.com

ONE of the biggest surprises Ford has served up in the spacious new Mondeo is the size of its road tax bill.

The annual levy for vehicle excise duty is not small, or even tiny. It's non-existent.

The emissions from the 1.6-litre engine in the Zetec Econetic model tested here are so low that this massively roomy five-door escapes paying any tax at all.

That alone would make it a highly attractive contender in the company car market, but the potential fuel consumption is another major plus point.

Ford claims the hefty hatchback is capable of up to 78mpg and even my combination of city rush-hour crawling and motorway cruising managed an average of about 60mpg.

The Mondeo name has been around for more than 20 years and in that time has proved hugely attractive with drivers looking for a big car capable of swallowing up five adults and a whopping amount of luggage.

This is a reassuringly solid car that copes effortlessly with long-distance travel, whisking passengers along in some considerable comfort.

The Ford Mondeo has been a popular buy in Britain for two decades

The latest version still delivers in spades in terms of space, but equipment has also taken a move upmarket. Perhaps the most intriguing improvement is to the rear seatbelts, that combine the benefits of an airbag and a conventional seatbelt.

The inflatable belts, which feel more comfortable than an ordinary belt as they are padded and softer, are designed to help reduce head, neck and chest injuries.

As with an airbag, the belt is activated when crash sensors detect an accident, forcing compressed gas out of a cylinder housed below the rear seat, through the buckle and into the belt. Ford says the belt rapidly expands to disperse crash forces across a body area five times greater than that achieved by a conventional seatbelt.

Ford says the new Mondeo range delivers the widest and most technologically advanced engine range in the model's history.

Choices range from 2.0-litre TDCi diesel engines that offer reduced emissions, and the first Mondeo petrol-electric hybrid, to the 1.0-litre EcoBoost; an amazingly capable little unit.

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2005 55 **NISSAN X-TRAIL 2.5 T-SPEC AUTOMATIC.** Petrol. Silver. Black leather interior. Local car. Superb condition. Approximately only 59000 recorded miles. Full Nissan service history. Sat-Nav. Alloys. Aircon. Sunroof. PAS.Remote central locking. Radio/CD. Electric windows and door mirrors. Heated seats etc. Sold with a full service and a new MOT. HPi clear £4,250

2007 07 **VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4SXI.** Black. 3 Door. Local car, excellent condition throughout. Superb drive. Low mileage, approximately 39750 recorded miles. Alloys. PAS. Radio/CD. Aircon. Electric windows and door mirrors. Good service record. Remote central locking. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt kit. HPi clear £3,495

2005 05 **FORD C-MAX 1.8** Black. 5 door. Previously supplied by ourselves. Local car. Lovely throughout. Aircon. PAS. Remote central locking. Radio/CD. Electric windows. Airbags. Sold with a new MOT and a full service. HPi clear £2,550

2003 53 **RENAULT KANGOO 1.2** Authentique WHEEL CHAIR CONVERSION. Silver. Local vehicle. Approximately only 65000 recorded miles. Very good condition throughout. PAS. Electric windows. Central locking. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt. HPI Clear. £2,295

2002 51 **FORD MONDEO ZETEC 2.0 TDCi.** 5 door hatchback. Metallic Blue. Local car in very nice condition throughout. PAS. Alloys. Aircon Remote central locking. Electric windows and door mirrors. Radio/CD. Very nice example of this popular large diesel car. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt kit. HPI Clear. £1,995

2003 03 **VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.8 PETROL ELEGANCE. 7 SEATER.** Silver, MOT until March 2016. ..... £1,395

2001 51 **NISSAN MICRA 1.0 VIBE. 5 doors.** Metallic Blue. PAS. Radio/CD. Local car. Very tidy throughout. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt. HPI Clear. £1,050

2006 56 **FORD FOCUS 1.8 Ghia.** 5 door. Silver. Local car. Aircon. Alloys. PAS. Heated front windscreen. Radio/CD. Electric windows and door mirrors. Remote central locking. Etc. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt kit. HPi clear. ..... Arriving weekend

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Tips to survive commuting

Stretch yourself and get comfortable

MOST of us don't enjoy our car commutes to work. But a tyre manufacturer has a theory that might help shorten daily drives and make them a bit more enjoyable.

With the help of a psychologist, Continental Tyres has devised a series of simple tips to help drivers feel like they are spending less time on the road.

First on the list is to leave 10 minutes earlier than you normally would. There's no arguing with the logic; it psychologically seems like you've reached your destination faster.

Second is having a good stretch before you get into the car and when you get out at the other end.

Third is setting the correct temperature inside your car and trying to make yourself comfortable.

Next, turn the radio on at a low-ish volume, turn it off for 10 minutes at point mid-way through your journey and then put it back on again.

This one is said to be especially effective on faster roads.

If you feel your mind starting to wander into the realms of boredom, wrench it back into the moment by picking a colour and counting the number of cars of that colour you can see.

Of course, you're a sensible driver and will be keeping to the two-second rule, but it's another thing to concentrate on.

Finally, be courteous. You can't have a good journey if you're raging about people pushing into the line ahead of you.

Whatever happens on your drive, let it go and focus on what's ahead.

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DN64SSO	**ASTRA** SRI 1.4 5DR HATCH	WHITE	11027	**£10,750**
DN64YRL	**ASTRA** 1.4 SRI TURBO (140PS) 6 SPD 5 DR	SILVER	11213	**£11,000**
BV64JHX	**ASTRA** 1.6I SRI (115PS) 5 DR HATCH	WHITE	2917	**£11,000**
BV64EKZ	**ASTRA** SRI 1.6 5DR HATCH	WHITE	3437	**£11,000**
DU15XZC	**ASTRA** DESIGN 1.4 DR HATCH	GREY	6937	**£11,000**
DN14LGY	**ASTRA** GTC SPORT 1.7 CDTI (110PS) S/S 3 DR	SILVER	18644	**£11,000**
DS64RNF	**ASTRA** SRI 1.7CDTI 5DR HATCH	SILVER	11657	**£12,000**
DN64GCX	**ASTRA** SRI 2.0CDTI 5DR HATCH S/S	SILVER	18864	**£12,000**
DN64YNO	**ASTRA** GTC SPORT 1.4 3DR HATCH S/S	BLUE	6874	**£12,250**
BV64HWZ	**ASTRA** 1.6I SRI (115PS) 5 DR HATCH	WHITE	899	**£12,500**
BV64KHX	**ASTRA** SRI 2.0 CDTI 5DR HATCH S/S	SILVER	7578	**£13,000**
BV64HKP	**ASTRA** SRI 2.0 CDTI 5DR HATCH S/S	SILVER	3171	**£13,000**
VE64KRG	**ASTRA** TECHLINE 1.6 SPORTS TOURERER	SILVER	1824	**£13,000**
DU64AXB	**ASTRA** GTC 1.7 SRI CDTI (130PS) S/S 3 DR	GREY	16341	**£14,000**
DS64URP	**ASTRA** GTC 2.0 SRI (165PS) S/S 6 SPD 3 DR	SILVER	14071	**£14,000**

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DL64UTV	**CORSA** SE 1.2 5DR HATCH	BLACK	11907	**£8,250**
DN64ODP	**CORSA** SE 1.2 5DR HATCH	SILVER	12988	**£8,250**
DN64WZF	**CORSA** 1.2 SE (85PS) 5 DR HATCH	GREY	18386	**£8,500**
DX64ZNL	**CORSA** 1.2I (85PS) SE 5 DR HATCH	SILVER	19972	**£8,500**
DL64PYO	**CORSA** 1.2I DESIGN (A/C) (85PS) 3 DR	BLACK	11485	**£8,500**
DL64RXV	**CORSA** 1.2I DESIGN (A/C) 3 DR HATCH	BLACK	13093	**£8,500**
DL64UXP	**CORSA** SE 1.4 5DR HATCH	BLACK	12442	**£8,500**
DU64BFA	**CORSA** 1.4I SE (100PS) 5 DR HATCH	SILVER	14274	**£9,000**
DL64SOC	**CORSA** DESIGN 1.2 3DR HATCH AC	BLACK	10630	**£9,500**
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DU15XNX	**CORSA** SE 1.0 5DR HATCH TURBO S/S	BLACK	7499	**£11,000**
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DV14GXR	**INSIGNIA** 2.0 CDTI (163PS) S/S 5 DR S/TOUR	SILVER	13039	**£14,000**
DU64PXP	**INSIGNIA** ELITE 2.0CDTI 5DR HATCH AUTO	SILVER	19234	**£16,000**
BV64GYD	**INSIGNIA** 2.0 CDTI ELITE NAV (163PS) AUTO	SILVER	3622	**£18,500**
VX64YOF	**INSIGNIA** SRI NAV 2.0 CTDI (195PS) S/S S/T	SILVER	9473	**£19,000**
BV64OOB	**INSIGNIA** SRI VX LINE 2.0 195PS CDTI S/T	WHITE	4556	**£20,000**
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BV64HPN	**ZAFIRA** 2.0 SRI (165PS) AUTO TOURER	BLACK	16240	**£17,000**
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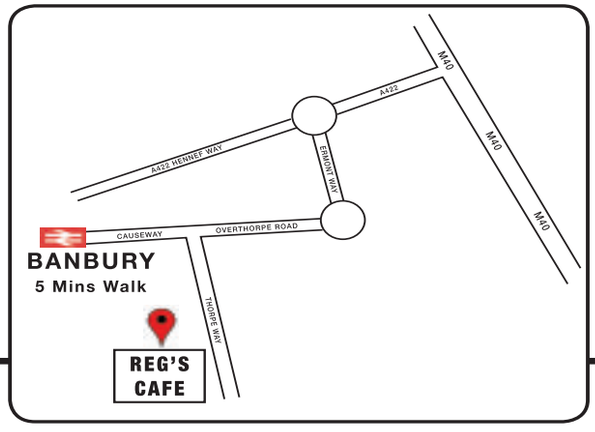

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